WELFARE

In a very few cases of total incapacitation, individuals have had to be placed in public institutions for care. Otherwise, the village takes care of its own unfortunates, in conformance with the traditional attitudes of self-sufficiency. A unit of the Lebanese Red Cross visits the village at regular intervals to provide medical care for those who need it, but have been unable or unwilling to go to a doctor in the city. There is a regular, and entirely traditional, mechanism for caring for families who get into financial straits. A close friend of the family, who has learned of the situation because of his closeness, goes to each household in the village saying, "There is among us a family in need. I am going to give them some money; how much are you willing to give?" It is very bad form to ask for whom the collection is being made, and a contribution which is offered under such conditions may be refused by the collector. The strict anonymity which accompanies this behavior suggests that even in such a tight in-group as the village keeping up appearances is a conscious value. Cliques and lineage divisions undoubtedly contribute to this.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONS

Everyone in the village, except for a handful among the very old, can literate. A quite respectable number have received or are receiving college educations. The significance of education in the village will be discussed in the next chapter; here it is appropriate to consider only the bearing which education has on occupations.

Literacy itself is no entry to Lebanon. In fact, among the Christians, at least, one can safely say that it is the expected thing. More literacy alone would raise one's aspirations only above that of manual laborer, in the city. For professional status or for governmental positions college education are prerequisites. Medicine and the law require additional training beyond college which no one in Mutrajil has recently undertaken. The number of positions open to ordinary college graduates which are in line with the individual's ambitions (building a learned and cultured person) are rather limited in Lebanon, and many such persons must be satisfied with whatever they can find. In consequence, a certain restlessness and dissatisfaction is to be found among those who have had advanced education.

AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS

Mutrajil depends, and has always depended, upon crops which do not require rain or irrigation in the growing season. In order, the most important are olives, figs and grapes. Of these the major cash crop is olives. This has not always been true. Up to 1914 the major cash crop in the village, and in Lebanon as a whole, was the [illegible]-worm cocoon, fed on mulberry leaves. Sericulture has not died out completely in Lebanon, and it is still fairly strong in the Kisrowan, Kura, Metn, and Shuf districts (Hitti, 1949b, p. 389), but it has long since lost its economic